GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:190
ANSWERED ON:15.07.2002
GLOBAL WARMING
PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn towards the news-item captioned "Global Warming" appearing in 'Dainik Jagran' dated May 19, 2002;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein;

(c) whether any scientific steps have been suggested for making good the likely loss and if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether these forecasts came to light earlier also; and

(e) if so, the action taken thereon?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU)

(a) to (e) :The Government is aware of the news-item captioned "Global Warming" appearing in 'Dainik Jagran' dated May 19, 2002 referring to the retreat of Himalayan glaciers, increased threat to coastal areas due to storms, changes in monsoon patterns, decline in crop productivity and adverse impacts on water availability. The assessment of possible impacts of global warming is largely based on climate change modelling. The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), set up jointly by World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 1988, has been undertaking comprehensive assessment of scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant to the understanding of risk of global warming and has so far published three comprehensive Assessment Reports in 1990, 1996 and 2001. According to the recent Third Assessment Report published in 2001, the earth's surface temperature is estimated to have increased by 0.60 + 0.20 C over the twentieth century. The global mean sea level is estimated to have been rising at the rate of 1 to 2 mm annually during the twentieth century. The report projects that globally averaged surface temperature may rise by 1.40 to 5.80 C between 1990 and 2100. The mean sea level may rise by 0.09 to 0.88 meter during the same period. In most tropical and sub-tropical countries, the potential yields of cereal crops may decrease. The frequency, duration and intensity of extreme weather events such as floods and droughts may increase. The widespread retreat of non-polar glaciers is likely to continue during the 21st century. The precipitation pattern may change and water scarcity in many areas may be further exacerbated.

India is a Party to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change which enjoins upon all Parties to address climate change (Global Warming) by undertaking appropriate measures including those relating to advancement of scientific understanding of cause and effect of climate change as well as consequences and response strategies. It has taken a number of steps in furtherance of the objective of the Convention including those relating to energy efficiency, energy conservation, power sector reforms, renewable energy, fuel switching to cleaner energy, afforestation and conservation of forests, efficient utilization of coal, reduction of gas flaring, installation of waste heat recovery systems in the oil sector and better cultivar practices in the agriculture sector. A number of studies have been initiated to study the consequences of global warming on water resources, human health, and crop productivity. Steps have also been taken to prepare the national inventory of anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases by sources and removals by sinks. These steps are expected to contribute positively towards mitigation of adverse impacts of climate change.